

# MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP  
Federal Member for Wannon



24 November 2009

## MAJOR WIN FOR LOCAL AGRICULTURE EXPORT INDUSTRIES

Federal Member for Wannon David Hawker today welcomed the Minister for Agriculture's agreement to a \$127.4 million package put forward by the Coalition to reform the AQIS Export Certification program.

In September the Coalition successfully moved to disallow moves by the Rudd Government to axe the 40 AQIS Export Certification rebate, which would have dire consequences for local dairy and meat processing.

Mr Hawker said he is very pleased the Government has agreed to a \$127.4 million reform package set out by the Coalition, which includes;

- \$85.3 million to reintroduce the 40 percent rebate for two years
- \$16.1 million to implement regulatory and export supply chain reforms
- \$26 million for redundancies to now be paid for by the Government
- Accumulated industry debts to be wiped
- Small meat processors will have their registration charges dropped from \$50,000 to \$17,800
- Regular audits to ensure industry is only paying for legitimate costs

"Many of our local agriculture exporters are doing it very tough at the moment, particularly with the high Australian dollar and given the extremely tight margins, the increased AQIS fees were potentially the knock out blow for many companies," Mr Hawker said.

"The Minister's decision to put policy ahead of politics is good news for companies like Midfield Meats and our local dairy industry, for whom the removal of the 40 percent rebate by the Rudd Government would have made exporting to some countries un-commercial.

"The Coalition has always made it clear that reform of the AQIS Export Certification program was our main priority. However, we were not prepared to see companies busted by the full fee increases.

"We were never satisfied with the \$60 million deal cobbled together with the Greens which was a political compromise and not a good policy outcome.

"We believe the transition arrangement where industry receives the 40 percent rebate for a further two years at a cost of \$85.3 is an excellent outcome and will give the Government and industry more time to ensure that the reforms can be implemented and are understood and accepted by our international customers."

Mr Hawker said he believed industry were prepared to now work with the Government in reforming the AQIS Export Certification program to ensure that it was cost effective and not cost prohibitive.

- ENDS -

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The Hon **David Hawker** MP Federal Member for Wannon

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